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PRIORITY SUBJECTS

THE PROBLEM OF THE INTEGRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO SOCIETY

Note by the Secretary-General

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1. At its thirty-first session, in 1989, as one of the measures to improve its future work, the Commission for Social Development proposed a revised provisional agenda for its thirty-second session, which was subsequently approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1989/131. That provisional agenda calls upon the Commission to, inter alia, consider in depth two priority subjects at its thirty-second session, one of them being the problem of the integration of young people into society.

2. The selection of this subject for in-depth consideration by the Commission reflects the growing international concern for the situation of young people, both in developing and developed countries. It also reflects the international community's interest in strengthening co-operation in order to better integrate young people into society, particularly within the framework of follow-up activities of the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace (General Assembly resolution 34/151).

3. In order to ensure the best preparation of the selected subject prior to its thirty-second session, the Commission called on interested Governments to offer to act as hosts to meetings that would bring together selected experts for intensive and pragmatic discussion of the issues involved. Subsequently, the Government of Spain offered to act as host to and to finance an expert meeting on the subject.

4. The report of the International Symposium on the Integration of Young People into Society, held at Toledo from 4 to 8 June 1990, is annexed to the present note.

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Annex

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE INTEGRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO SOCIETY, HELD AT TOLEDO FROM 4 TO 8 JUNE 1990

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INTRODUCTION

1. The International Symposium on the Integration of Young People into Society was held at Toledo from 4 to 8 June 1990. The Symposium was conducted by the United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNOV/CSDHA), in close co-operation with the Instituto de la Juventud of the Ministry for Social Affairs of Spain.

2. The objectives of the Symposium were to assist Governments, particularly those of developing countries, in strengthening and improving their national capacities for the full and effective participation of youth in social life and development, as well as to review and assess selected national experiences, including obstacles encountered, in the process of integrating young people into society. Specifically, the Symposium did three things:

(a) Provided a forum for participants to exchange knowledge and experience on approaches to the integration of young people into society and on achievements and obstacles encountered in this regard;

(b) Reviewed and discussed the concepts involved in the integration of young people into social life and development;

(c) Identified policy options and guidelines to assist the Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-second session, in 1991, in considering the integration of young people into society, which the Commission, at its thirty-first session, had identified as a priority subject for its in-depth consideration.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Definition of the concept of integration of young people into society

3. While reaffirming that youth is not autonomous in society, it is necessary to recognize that youth is an important population group whose integration is essential for the proper development of society. The problems that society
confronts are simultaneously those of youth; but, along with them, young people also have their own specific problems, arising primarily from the process of their integration into adult society.

4. The unique characteristic of youth as a period of transition towards adulthood makes it necessary to establish specific mechanisms for the realization of their priority needs and the achievement of economic and personal independence as individuals.

5. The integration of young people into society does not mean a paternalistic approach or a mere "mechanical incorporation" into existing society. Rather, it refers to the process of their full involvement in society, which implies the following:

(a) A dynamic interrelationship between youth and adult society;

(b) Active participation on an equal basis of young women and men in the political, economic, social and cultural life of society;

(c) The fullest possible utilization of youth's creativity for the benefit of genuine democracy and development;

(d) An obligation on the part of adult society to provide equal opportunities for various categories of youth.

6. Governments should be encouraged to do the following:

(a) To formulate, for policy-planning purposes, a definition of youth appropriate to their national circumstances and to clarify the place and role of youth in society and the responsibility of society towards youth;

(b) To prepare and regularly update statistical profiles of youth, as well as substantive analyses of issues of concern to youth, in collaboration with concerned United Nations agencies and bodies, non-governmental organizations, youth organizations, research institutes and other concerned organizations.

B. Analysis of issues and problems encountered in integrating young people into society, with particular focus on education, training and the promotion of income-generating activities

7. The following are major obstacles often encountered in the integration of young people into society:

(a) Lack of sufficient political will on the part of decision makers;

(b) A tendency to not view the concept of youth comprehensively, that is, within the political, socio-economic and cultural framework of the country;

(c) Insufficient support to youth organizations and lack of proper channels and structures for youth participation;

(d) Inadequate access to information.

8. Youth should be involved in planning and policy-making by expressing their own views and analyses of their problems and needs, as well as by participating directly in the design of youth policies and programmes. Young women and men should enjoy equal participation in the planning process.

C. Ways and means of addressing the integration of young people into society

9. The integration of youth into society is a comprehensive and complex process requiring wide-ranging programmes and strategies. Traditional youth policies tend both to address a rather limited number of youth concerns on a sectoral basis and to suggest conventional ways of approaching youth integration. Therefore, there is a need to develop and implement a comprehensive youth policy within the framework of national development planning, with emphasis on the manner in which different subgroups of youth are integrated into society.

10. Young women comprise half of the young population. In general, their situation is different from that of young men. It is necessary, therefore, to adopt concrete measures in favour of young women to achieve equality of opportunities and equal access to full participation in development.

11. The Symposium recommended that Governments take the following measures:

(a) The promotion and strengthening of integrated youth policies, within the framework of comprehensive national development plans;

(b) The promotion and implementation of effective measures responding to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized young people, such as rural youth, poor urban youth, illiterate youth, disabled youth, youth in war-torn areas, young migrants, young refugees and unemployed youth etc., with particular emphasis on eradicating illiteracy and ensuring equal access to education and vocational training, employment, health care etc.;

(c) The establishment and development of national co-ordination mechanisms and youth institutional structures, which would ensure the effective elaboration and implementation of national youth policies, within an intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach;

(d) The granting of priority to youth policies and programmes when allocating financial resources;

(e) Close collaboration with non-governmental youth and youth-servicing organizations in policy formulation and programme implementation, as part of a necessary dialogue on the integration of youth into society;

(f) The systematic review and evaluation of progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation of youth policies and programmes;

(g) The strengthening of their national capacities, with the co-operation of concerned United Nations bodies and agencies, including the regional commissions, by the following means:

(i) Provision of technical assistance, policy guidance and advisory services in the areas of institution-building, resource mobilization, training and information exchange;

(ii) Development of methodologies for collecting, processing and analysing comparable qualitative and quantitative indicators on youth;

(iii) Reinforcement of channels of communication between the United Nations and youth organizations at the national, regional and international levels.

D. Identification of priority needs, concrete measures and recommendations for action to promote the integration of young people into society

12. In view of the important social, economic and political transformations and changes currently taking place, there is need for an on-going review of the current and emerging needs of youth and of youth-related policies in accordance with the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace (General Assembly resolution 34/151). This entails an evaluation of the progress achieved since 1985, a review and assessment of current and emerging youth issues, concerns and trends (e.g. drug and alcohol abuse; sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS); and the environment) and a review, appraisal and revision of plans of action at the national, regional and international levels.

13. The Symposium recommended that Governments, in collaboration with organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental youth organizations, should take the following actions:

(a) Support and encourage youth policy development aimed at the improvement of the quality of life of young people and their integration into society as active contributors to and beneficiaries of the development process;

(b) Promote more effective access for young people to the means required for productive work, such as land, credit, training and extension services, and to markets; and create innovative schemes for the promotion of income-generating programmes, with particular emphasis on self-help activities, including voluntary development organizations and co-operatives;

(c) Ensure that curricula and educational systems better reflect current economic trends and cultural realities, paying greater attention to issues of human rights, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the teaching of human rights;

(d) Take effective measures to assist the family in successfully playing its role in the education, guidance and socialization of young people;

(e) Intensify efforts to combat drug and alcohol abuse and AIDS among youth and to develop and strengthen prevention as well as rehabilitation services for those affected;

(f) Ensure that the draft programme of action to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, the preparation of which was requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/59 and which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, is based on two factors:

(i) Proposals made by Member States, concerned United Nations bodies and agencies, including the regional commissions, other intergovernmental organizations as well as non-governmental youth organizations;

(ii) A thorough evaluation of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth (A/40/256, annex) at all levels;

and, further, that it identifies future strategies and refines the concept and practice of analysis, long-term planning and the implementation of youth policies at all levels for the year 2000 and beyond. At the national level, this would entail an evaluation of national youth policy and the selection of realistic targets to be realized by 1995 and the year 2000, respectively. At the regional and international levels, it would entail the revision of regional plans of action on youth and the adoption of a revised global strategy for the year 2000 and beyond.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SYMPOSIUM

A. Opening of the Symposium

14. The opening ceremony of the Symposium was attended by Mrs. Matilde Fernández, Minister for Social Affairs of Spain, Mr. Daniel Romero, government representative in the Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha, and Mr. Juan Manuel Molina, Lord Mayor of Toledo.

15. In his opening address, the Director of the Social Development Division of UNOV/CSDHA stated that notwithstanding the achievements of recent years, the situation of youth, considered globally, remained difficult. A large proportion of young people did not enjoy the benefits of full participation and effective integration in many social and economic sectors. Since

the International Youth Year, which had signified a new phase in youth policies and programmes, efforts had been reinforced, at all levels, to develop long-term planning on youth. An international consensus had emerged in the form of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth, which was the foundation for an ongoing global strategy on youth that regarded young people as intrinsic agents of development. The Director said that despite the considerable achievements of the follow-up to the Year, there was now a need for still more advocacy on behalf of youth; more active commitment and tangible action on the part of the international community; the development of national capacities for youth planning and implementation; and adequate reflection on and the incorporation of youth-related concerns in development plans.

16. In her welcoming address, the Minister for Social Affairs of Spain emphasized her country's concern for improving the process of the integration of the young people into societies all over the world and for opening ways into the future for them. She believed that an essential prerequisite for youth integration was the eradication of unemployment. Massive unemployment among the young, which also existed in Spain, had resulted in an intolerable waste of human resources and had negatively affected the daily lives of young people. The Government of Spain was undertaking increased efforts, through its Integrated Plan for Youth, to integrate young people into the work force, especially those groups which, because of their geographical location, their sex or their status as immigrants, were at a disadvantage.

17. In concluding, she stressed her country's solidarity with developing countries and underlined its commitment to achieving peace and development in countries with fewer resources and possibilities in the world economy.

B. Attendance

18. The Symposium was attended by 27 participants from 20 of the 32 member States of the Commission for Social Development, who were directly involved in youth policies, programme planning and administration. It was also attended by representatives of Secretariat units and one United Nations body as well as by observers from a specialized agency and a non-governmental organization.

C. Election of officers

19. The following officers were elected:

Chairperson:	Aurelio Fernández (Spain)
Vice-Chairperson:	Elsa M. Castro (Ecuador)
Rapporteur:	Margaret Acayo (Uganda)

D. Adoption of the agenda

20. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening of the Symposium.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Introduction of working papers.

5. Definition of the concept of integration of young people.

6. Analysis of issues and problems encountered in integrating young people into society, with particular focus on education, training and the promotion of income-generating opportunities.

7. Ways and means of addressing the integration of young people into society:

   (a) Need for an integrated national youth policy;

   (b) Strengthening national capacities and institutional structures to facilitate the integration of youth in society;

8. Identification of priority needs, concrete measures and recommendations for action to promote the integration of young people into society.

9. Adoption of the report of the Symposium.

E. Establishment of the working groups

21. The Symposium established two working groups to discuss in depth the problems and issues related to the integration of young people into society and to prepare recommendations for further consideration by the plenary.

F. Documentation

22. The documents available to the Symposium are listed in annex II. Two background papers, one on institutional structures and prerequisites for integrating young people into society and the other on obstacles to the full integration of young women into society, had been prepared for the Symposium by UNOV/CSDHA. Also serving as background material were the reports of two meetings: the Interregional Consultative Meeting on Integrated Planning of Youth Policies, Strategies and Programmes, held at Beijing from 17 to 23 October 1988, and the International Meeting on Establishment and Development of National Machineries for Youth, held at Bangkok from 8 to 12 November 1989. Technical resource papers were made available by participants.

G. Adoption of the report and closure of the Symposium

23. The report of the Symposium was adopted by consensus on 8 June 1990.

24. The participants in the Symposium expressed their profound gratitude to the Government of Spain and the Instituto de la Juventud, Ministry for Social Affairs, for their generous hospitality and the excellent facilities provided to the Symposium, which greatly facilitated its successful outcome.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION IN THE PLENARY

A. Introduction of the working papers

25. Discussion in the plenary sessions began with the introduction of two working papers prepared for the Symposium by consultants: "The integration of young persons into the societies of developed countries", by José Palau Balletbo and "The integration of young persons into the societies of devel-

oping countries", by Jean-Michel Bazinet. A brief overview of those papers is given in paragraphs 26-39.

26. In the working paper on developed countries it was stated that one of the meanings of the integration of young people was the incorporation of the energy of the young in the shaping of society. It was a dynamic, ongoing process implying not only that must young people adapt to society, but also that society must change continuously.

27. Demographic trends for the forthcoming decades pointed towards a reduction in the number and proportion of young people. That might bring about a shift in the priority assigned to problems. On the one hand, unemployment might be alleviated, but on the other hand, the influence of young people might decrease as their relative numbers decreased.

28. An adequate youth policy must aim at strengthening and improving the role of those institutions or social organizations that exerted an influence on the trajectory from adolescence to adulthood and that determined the capabilities and personalities of adults.

29. Integration into the labour force and the economic sector was not per se the most serious issue confronting young people, but it was an essential prerequisite for their general integration into social, political and cultural life.

30. The difficulties of the transition from childhood to adulthood were exacerbated when there were other handicapping factors, such as gender, immigrant status or membership of a disadvantaged group.

31. The existence of specific national structures for youth integration, or the creation thereof if none existed, was indispensable for developing and implementing comprehensive youth policies.

32. In the working paper on developing countries, it was stressed that the concept of the integration of young people needed to be clarified. Depending on its definition, youth had often been considered as a passive element, an object of measures designed to make it to submit to existing values and norms and fit into society as it existed. However, problems in the relationship between youth and society arose primarily because society had failed to adapt to the needs and aspirations of youth. It was, therefore, necessary to relate integration to the concept of participation, thereby implying the active involvement of young people in a process that regenerated society and at the same time made youth a responsible part of it.

33. Issues affecting youth integration were primarily the consequence of the rapid transformations that had altered the proper functioning of the main socializing institutions, primarily the family and the educational system. Models of development that had been adopted had also considerably reduced the demand for manpower in rural areas and had impoverished the rural sector without providing enough alternatives in the rapidly growing modern/urban sector. Moreover, a rapidly increasing youth population was confronted with the inadequacy of society's response to their needs and expectations. That led to the marginalization of large numbers of youth, which constituted a considerable waste of resources available for development and a human tragedy.

34. The situation of youth was determined by policies and programmes that concerned the whole society and its development. Therefore, unless the role of youth in those policies and programmes was properly defined, their situation could not be improved.

35. That led to the concept of a national youth policy, which defined the place and role of youth in all sectors of development, making them part of the national development policy and not treating youth as an isolated sector. There was also the need to ensure that youth participated in the elaboration of such a policy so that their needs and aspirations were properly interpreted and translated into that policy.

36. National structures for youth policy should be such that they could co-ordinate the participation of all sectors of the Government, of society and of youth itself in the elaboration and implementation of the youth policy and that they could have direct access to the highest level of policy-making in the country. Thus, the structures should both reflect the political commitment of the Government and permit the integrated approach without which the elaboration of a national youth policy could not be meaningfully undertaken.

37. At the national level, a review of existing policy should be undertaken and measures adopted in order to reinforce the role played by socializing institutions, particularly to strengthen the family and adapt education and training programmes to the new needs of society. The access of young people to the means of production should be facilitated. Responsible roles in social and economic institutions should be open to young people.

38. Special efforts should be made at the local or community level to mobilize and co-ordinate human and other resources and to ensure a role for young people themselves as they sought to become integrated into their society as part of the process of developing an integrated community.

39. Action at the international level should have the following main objectives: (a) to reinforce youth policy development at the national level, to evaluate how this process developed in the past and to revise the regional plans of action adopted on the occasion of the International Youth Year and (b) to propose a new global strategy for the year 2000 and beyond.

B. Definition of the concept of integration of young people

40. Prior to the discussion on the definition of the concept of the integration of young people into society, the participants underlined the need to view young people as active partners and protagonists rather than as passive beneficiaries and antagonists.

41. It was pointed out that although the importance of youth integration was widely recognized, the concept of the integration of youth into society had not yet been sufficiently clarified. On the one hand, youth, which had been defined by the United Nations, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States, as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, did not represent a homogeneous group with identical needs and aspirations. On the other hand, the concept of integration needed to be carefully defined in order to avoid possible negative connotations of paternalism, which considered young people as a passive element to be fitted into society. One view was that it might be more appropriate to use the term "incorporation" rather than "integration".

42. It was noted that all individuals existed within society as it was organized in the modern world. Each individual acted within the everyday context provided by the family, community and society. Young people could not be separated from society: in that sense, they were already integrated.

43. Some experts from developing countries emphasized that the process of integrating young people into society in developing countries was in certain senses different and more difficult than the same process in developed countries. In many developing countries they were among the principal victims of wars and other forms of endemic violence. Moreover, a distressingly high proportion of young people in most developing countries were still handicapped by illiteracy and thus faced permanent marginalization from productive work. Nonetheless, there was a great opportunity for young people to participate in the common task of forging democratic styles of development.

44. With reference to this last point, participants agreed that both developed and developing societies were constantly changing and that none had yet achieved full and equitable social development. Thus, integration did not mean that young people should passively accept the values of older generations. It meant, rather, that they should be encouraged and supported in their efforts to participate fully in the creation of more equitable societies that were better adapted to emerging situations. Their creativity and fresh viewpoints were vital, and it was their right to have a voice in the formulation of social strategies that would affect their own futures.

45. One participant stated that it would be a mistake to conceive of youth as a homogeneous whole for which integration would be a single process. With regard to education and work, for example, the problem of school drop-outs who entered the labour market prematurely did not occur at random but was concentrated among youth from poor families and was a key factor in generating poverty from generation to generation. Thus, integration meant different things and presented different challenges depending on whether the young people in question belonged to privileged social sectors that were adequately integrated or to poorer sectors.

46. It was noted that the concept of integration of youth was broad in scope and content, encompassing various definitions and approaches peculiar to national circumstances and experiences. The view was expressed that the concept of the integration of youth was multidimensional and that it was both a goal and a long-term process. As a goal, it entailed improving the situation of youth and enhancing their active participation in development. As a multisectoral, dynamic process, it entailed adjusting policies and strategies to enable young people to benefit from, and contribute to, society.

47. One participant proposed that integration should be defined as a process that (a) facilitated the sharing of intrinsic social, cultural, economic and political values, (b) increased the opportunities for full and effective participation and (c) enhanced the ability of young people to contribute to the development of the family, the community and the society.

48. It was emphasized that integration was meant to be a process that granted young people a partnership status within society. Integration, to be practicable and effective, required, on the one hand, measures that would prepare young people to exercise their rights and fulfil their duties and responsibilities in such areas as education and training, and on the other hand, measures to facilitate the establishment of institutions and associations where young people could, freely and jointly, prepare the conditions for their integration into society, with representative strength.

49. While it was recognized that the situation differed in developing and developed countries and from region to region, there was a similarity of approaches to be adopted world-wide.

50. In both developed and developing countries, there was always a segment of the youth population that was marginalized and needed special attention. Nevertheless, the essential political measures to be taken to facilitate the integration of young people into society were identical throughout the world irrespective of region or socio-political system. There was no active integration if the political will to make young people real partners was lacking.

C. Analysis of issues and problems in integrating young people into society, with particular focus on education, training and the promotion of income-generating opportunities

51. In discussing the agenda item, many participants pointed out the need for differentiating between the issues of youth in developed countries and developing countries, because those issues were a reflection of socio-economic development and cultural configurations in those countries. However, it was cautioned that such differences, i.e. the differences between North and South, should not be exaggerated: while young people were indeed not homogeneous all over the world, they should not be divided into two. For example, there were sectors of youth in many developed countries that were not fully integrated and shared the problems of young people in developing countries.

52. In attempting to identify the issues and problems involved in the integration of young people, participants recalled that integration was a positive dynamic process that perceived youth as active partners of the process itself.

53. A major factor affecting the process whereby young people were integrated into society was the rapidity with which changes were taking place in the socio-economic, political and cultural spheres of modern societies and the slowness of socializing institutions to adapt to those changes, thereby rendering the institutions ineffective. Some participants stated that adult society often failed to react positively to the values, aspirations and needs of young people. It was observed that young people were confronted with problems that had, by and large, been generated and/or exacerbated by adults. That led to intergenerational conflict attributable to mutual misunderstanding, insensitivity, intolerance etc. In that respect, one participant urged adults to grow together with the younger generation.

54. Youth integration was to be achieved by preparing young people to assume and fulfil their responsibilities and benefit from the progress of civilization. Education was a key element in that process. The education system should comprise the school, voluntary associations and the community. However, educational systems, by and large, had not kept pace with rapid social, economic and technological changes and had reacted too slowly to the expectations of young people, to the needs of society and, particularly, to the world of work. In many societies, they simply increased the number of graduates without helping them to make a successful passage into the world of work. The current educational system was preparing young people for passive rather than active integration. Moreover, access to educational opportunities, as well as the quality and equality of those opportunities, still remained a serious problem in many countries. That problem was more serious in rural areas, where opportunities for education were more restricted.

55. Several specific elements of current educational systems, such as physical education, the preparation of young students for intercultural exchanges etc., required modification. Physical education and sports played a role in inculcating values of fair play, teamwork and community spirit. Youth and student exchanges between young people from different countries, which helped to

broaden cross-cultural understanding between peoples, were important since integration into society implied respect for different cultures, values and traditions.

56. If education paved the way to the social integration of young people, employment cemented the process. It was noted that successful passage from youth to adulthood also implied obtaining meaningful and proper employment, including self-employment. In the absence of that, young people faced the danger of economic and social marginalization. While the level of economic activity of a country and the distribution of its benefits were the general determinants of overall employment opportunities, young people faced specific problems in the area of employment. In the first instance, an ineffective education system might not have imparted the appropriate skills and knowledge that corresponded to the demands of the labour market. Also, the labour market was generally unfavourable to young people and they, particularly young women, were discriminated against.

57. It was also noted that, in many developing countries, large proportions of young people were engaged in subsistence agriculture. The informal sector was often too weak to absorb the youth that were not employed in the formal sector. In developed countries, the labour market did not always succeed in fulfilling the expectations of youth. It was observed that the present young generation stressed the interest value of work more than had previous young generations. To them, work also meant opportunities to learn new things and to lead an independent life.

58. The demographic factor was identified as another major issue that negatively affected youth integration, particularly in many developing countries. Under conditions of limited economic growth, an increase in population led to unemployment, insufficient educational opportunities, insecurity of food supplies etc. It was also observed that young people faced housing shortages, which constrained their independence.

59. Issues pertaining to the environment and sustainable development were of crucial concern to young people since they were the future generation who would have to live in a less ecologically stable world. One participant stressed that the younger generation was opposed to a culture that was oriented exclusively towards industrial growth and that was complacent about destroying the ecological balance.

60. The view was expressed that integration was closely related to the protection of the rights of young people by means of national legislation. Although the existence of such legislation might not necessarily mean that the rights were being implemented, it was important to ensure the legal protection of those rights and to increase the awareness of them.

61. Political stability and peace were also identified as prerequisites for the proper integration of youth in society under conditions of genuine democracy.

62. Participants stressed the need to pay particular attention to the special problems of rural youth. They constituted the poorest of all subgroups of young people. Their problems included poverty, limited access to educational opportunities, unemployment and underemployment, inadequate housing, lack of opportunities to organize and participate in social and cultural life and language and cultural barriers that tied them to subsistence agriculture and petty trade. It was noted that the informal sector of the economy often failed to absorb those rural youth who were not meaningfully employed by the formal economic sector.

63. It was noted that the integration of young women involved issues and problems that were different from those for young men. Often, the term "young people" was used from the perspective of young men only. Especially in the rural areas of developing countries, considerably more girls than boys had no access to education. The characterization of certain jobs, professions and sectors of employment as "feminine" and destined to be filled by women, as well as lower pay for women for the same work, hindered the social integration of females on an equal basis. On the one hand, educational systems impelled girls towards stereotypical subjects and professions, thereby binding them to stereotypical and low-paid jobs. On the other hand, as an increasing number of young women became single heads of households, they faced severe economic difficulties in later life. Also, teenage pregnancies influenced the future of girls drastically, and unprotected sexual exposure made young women especially vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases.

64. It was emphasized that more attention should be paid to the special needs and problems of other groups of young people in marginal situations, particularly with regard to vocational training and the promotion of equality of job opportunities.

65. The Symposium highlighted the following prerequisites for the effective integration of young people into society:

(a) The encouragement of a new perception of youth as a positive force for development and social change as well as a vital resource;

(b) The closer linkage of education with the economic, social and cultural realities and needs of society;

(c) The promotion of the equality of job opportunities and treatment for young people and the advocacy of policies aimed at full employment and the elimination of unemployment among young people;

(d) The formulation of legislation concerning youth and ensuring the rule of law with a view to encouraging the participation of youth in all aspects of national life;

(e) The existence of the political will to initiate and pursue a youth integration policy;

(f) The prevalence of political stability and continuity, which would allow the lengthy process of policy development to receive the permanent political commitment it required.

D. Ways and means of addressing the integration of young people into society

(a) The need for an integrated national youth policy

66. It was recognized by many participants that the International Youth Year had generated an ever-increasing global awareness of the situation of youth on the part of Governments and the general public. A basic premise of the International Youth Year strategy was that the needs of young people could be met more effectively if countries elaborated and developed an integrated national youth policy. The participants noted that a major achievement of the Year was the development, in many countries, of comprehensive national youth policies based on the new perception of youth as an active and responsible contributor to, and a major resource for, development.

67. It was underlined that an integrated national youth policy must concern all sectors - social, economic, cultural and political - of the life of a country. Such a policy, it was stated, must harmonize all policies, programmes, strategies and plans elaborated by those sectors in their relation to young people.

68. The process of developing an integrated national youth policy was a complex task often not sufficiently understood, particularly with regard to its scope and content. Some participants pointed out that a national youth policy should be integrative, multisectoral, cross-sectoral and multidimensional.

69. It was recognized that youth policy and national development policy should be congruent and in harmony with each other. Indeed, the national development plan should have an orientation towards youth in all sectors.

70. In that connection, the following prerequisites for the development of an integrated national youth policy were identified:

(a) The definition and articulation of a concept of youth appropriate to national circumstances, outlining the place and role of youth in society and the responsibilities of society towards youth;

(b) An analysis of the situation, needs and aspirations of youth, including statistical and demographic profiles on youth in general and on subcategories of youth in particular;

(c) A survey, assessment and review of the various existing governmental and non-governmental programmes and of the resources available for these programmes, the categories and numbers of youth reached, their relevance to youth and their streamlining and co-ordination;

(d) The establishment of priorities;

(e) The definition of measurable targets within a specific time-frame;

(f) The strengthening of mechanisms at the national and local levels for co-ordination and implementation purposes;

(g) Consultations and co-operation with non-governmental organizations to ensure their active and effective contribution in the formulation and implementation of national youth policies.

(b) Strengthening national capacities and institutional structures to facilitate the integration of youth into society

71. The participants reaffirmed the need to strengthen national capacities and institutional structures for youth with a view to ensuring long-term planning for youth, in accordance with the strategy and objectives of the International Youth Year. Effective institutional structures would secure the effective integration of youth policy into national development planning and ensure the co-ordination of all related activities. Such structures, essential throughout the processes of policy formulation and implementation, would operationalize national youth policy, the main instrument for the integration of youth into society. In that regard, one participant thought that, in the debate on youth integration, too little emphasis had been given to the strengthening of national capacities and institutional structures.

72. It was stated that the overall objective of institutional structures should be the elaboration of national policies on youth.

73. The functions these structures performed included the following:

(a) Participation in the formulation of national youth policies and plans;

(b) Advocacy and co-ordination of implementation of policies and programmes for youth, including training programmes;

(c) Monitoring progress;

(d) Research and collection of data;

(e) Serving as an international focal point.

74. It was emphasized that the institutional structure was intended to give purpose and direction to youth policies, programmes and strategies. In order for the structure to carry out its tasks, certain basic conditions must be fulfilled:

(a) The structure must have access to the highest political levels of Government so that its work was accomplished in close co-operation with those who made policy in the country;

(b) The location within the Government of the youth policy structure should reflect the political will and commitment to the elaboration of that policy;

(c) All concerned government departments, other concerned groups and individuals and the various sectors of society, including the young people themselves, must actively participate in the formulation and implementation process;

(d) If youth was really recognized as a vital human resource for the present and future development of a country, planning should be carried out and resources allocated;

(e) Technical and administrative support were required to ensure that those structures carried out their tasks, such as documentation, research, liaison, consultation and promotion;

(f) Particular emphasis should be given to the issue of co-ordination at all levels, since it would succeed only when it was imposed from above by the highest possible government authority or when the concerned institutions could be convinced that their autonomy would be respected and that their own objectives and programmes would benefit from the concerted efforts of all.

75. The view was expressed that other organs besides the national machineries should play a pivotal role in the development of a youth policy. The intersectoral nature of youth issues required the participation and consultation of all the social groups in a particular society, including young people themselves, who could contribute their own perceptions and creative approaches to that important task. It was underlined that non-governmental youth organizations were particularly important in that regard because they could provide the means and the framework for direct youth involvement. They should be encouraged to participate in the preparation and implementation of policies concerning youth at all levels.

76. One participant stated that many developing countries had established youth volunteer corps that provided training in such areas as literacy, health, and vocational and self-employment skills. Another participant stressed the need for youth development centres at the local level.

5. Identification of priority needs, concrete measures and recommendations for action to promote the integration of young people into society

77. After discussions on certain aspects relating to the integration of young people into society, the Symposium formulated suggestions and recommendations that would be brought to the attention of the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-second session. It was decided to refer consideration of agenda item 5 to the working groups.

III. RESULTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

78. The Symposium was divided into two working groups for three sessions. Working group I focused on agenda items 5 and 6. The chairperson was Vappu Taipale (Finland) and the Rapporteur was Paul J. Galea (Malta). Working group II focused on agenda items 7 and 8. The chairperson was Syed Sarfraz Ahmed (Pakistan) and the Rapporteur was Guillermo Adams (Spain).

79. The working groups were provided with a working paper that had been prepared by UNOV/CSDHA, "Institutional structures and prerequisites for integrating young people into society", as well as with a list of draft recommendations.

80. Each working group drew conclusions and formulated recommendations that could assist planners in the development of youth policy.

Annex I

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Units of the Secretariat of the United Nations

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

United Nations Office at Vienna

United Nations bodies

United Nations Children's Fund

Observers

United Nations specialized agencies

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Non-governmental organizations

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

Consultants

José Palau Balletbo

Jean-Michel Bazinet

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Working papers

Symbol	Title
	"The integration of young persons into the societies of developed countries", by J. Palau Balletbo
	"The integration of young persons into the societies of developing countries", by J.-M. Bazinet
A/40/256, annex	Guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth

Background documents

E/CEPAL/G.1285	Report of the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting for the International Youth Year, San José, Costa Rica, 3-7 October 1983
E/ECWA/SDP/ CONF.1/4/Rev.1	Final report of the Regional Preparatory Meeting devoted to the International Youth Year for Western Asia, Baghdad, 9-13 October 1983
ECA/SDEHSD/IYY/ 83/RPT	Report of the Regional Meeting on the International Youth Year, Addis Ababa, 20-24 June 1983
IYY/ECE/RPM/4	Final report of the European Regional Meeting dedicated to the International Youth Year, Costinesti, Romania, 5-9 September 1983

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PRIORITY SUBJECTS

SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE CRITICAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its thirty-first session, as one of the measures to improve its future work, the Commission for Social Development proposed a revised provisional agenda for its thirty-second session, which was subsequently approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1989/131. That provisional agenda calls for the Commission to, inter alia, consider in depth two priority subjects at its thirty-second session, one of them being the social impact of the critical economic environment on developing countries: strategies for social development co-operation.

2. The selection of this subject for in-depth consideration by the Commission reflects the growing international concern for social conditions, particularly in many developing countries. It also reflects the interest of both developed and developing countries in strengthening co-operation to achieve higher levels of living and improved social conditions in the face of new challenges for social policy.

3. In order to ensure the best preparation of the selected subject prior to its thirty-second session, the Commission called on interested Governments to offer to act as hosts to meetings that would bring together selected experts for an intensive and pragmatic discussion of the issues involved. Subsequently, the Government of Finland offered to act as host to and to finance an expert meeting on the subject.

4. The report on the Meeting of the Expert Group on the Social Impact of the Critical Economic Environment on Developing Countries: Strategies for Social Development Co-operation, held at Järvenpää, Finland, from 17 to 21 September 1990, is annexed to the present note.

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*E/CN.5/1991/1.

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Annex

REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE CRITICAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION, HELD AT JÄRVENPÄÄ, FROM 17 TO 21 SEPTEMBER 1990

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Meeting of the Expert Group on the Social Impact of the Critical Economic Environment on Developing Countries: Strategies for Social Development Co-operation was held at Järvenpää, Finland, from 17 to 21 September 1990. It was organized by the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, in co-operation with the National Board of Social Welfare of Finland, and was financially supported by the Finnish International Development Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the host Government. The Meeting was held pursuant to resolution 31/3 of the Commission for Social Development, entitled "Improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development", appendix, paragraphs 3 and 5-7.

2. As the Meeting took place at a time when the General Assembly was about to consider the adoption of an international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, it provided a timely opportunity of focusing attention on social development issues and international co-operation in support of social objectives.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

3. The Meeting was attended by 14 experts nominated by their Governments and serving in their personal capacity (see appendix I). They had been selected in order to achieve the most equitable geographical representation and because of their broad range of professional backgrounds related to social welfare and to development activities of Governments making available or utilizing development assistance. The Meeting was also attended by 11 observers nominated by their Governments.

4. The Meeting elected Vappu Taipale (Finland) as Chairman, Davison Mendamenda (Zambia) as Vice-Chairman and Eric Hanley (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as Rapporteur.

5. Thirteen substantive reports were contributed by the experts (see appendix II). Those reports, together with the documentation prepared by the secretariat, provided the primary orientation for discussion.

6. In opening the Meeting, the representative of the Secretariat and temporary Chairman expressed appreciation for the substantive, financial and technical support and the excellent facilities provided by the host Government and the National Board of Social Welfare.

7. Speaking on behalf of the host country, Markus Aaltonen, member of the Finnish Parliament and Chairman of its Committee for Foreign Affairs, said that he regarded the task of the Meeting as helping to advance social equity and well-being and to integrate the social perspective into development strategies. He stated that development co-operation was strongly emphasized by Nordic countries: they had achieved or even exceeded the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance; however, only a small part of the funds made available were used to directly fund social projects. In evaluating sustainable development, the following had to be taken into consideration: well-being, which comprised both a certain material living standard and quality of life; ecological and environmental aspects; the need to narrow the gap between living standards of

different segments of the population; and population policies in respect of both national birth rates and international migration.

8. The Chairman stated that rapid technological development was creating new challenges for society, such as different social structures and a new division of labour. She stressed the need for new concepts and ways of implementing social policy as part of a global approach to sustainable development in which social justice was an essential element. In development co-operation, efforts were being made to achieve a real partnership, a common goal being to strengthen popular participation, self-help among individuals and groups, and income-generating measures as an integral part of social well-being; it was essential to develop more sophisticated measures of anticipating and of following up the social consequences of all development co-operation activities.

9. The representative of the Secretariat stated the purpose of the Meeting within the context of the work programme of the United Nations.

10. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening of the Meeting.

2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

4. The social impact of the critical economic environment on developing countries.

5. Strategies for social development co-operation:

   (a) Challenges for social policy in the 1990s;

   (b) Current co-operation modalities;

   (c) Possible new approaches.

6. Adoption of the report of the Meeting.

7. Closure of the Meeting.

11. The Meeting established two working groups to consider in depth a number of themes that it had identified. It elected Pauline Knight (Jamaica) as Chairman of Working Group I, Johann Unger (Austria) as Rapporteur of Working Group I, and Eric Hanley (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as Chairman and Rapporteur of Working Group II.

12. The Meeting considered and adopted its report on 21 September 1990.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

13. The Meeting noted the greater attention being given to social issues in the preceding years. Social development questions were much more prominent on the agendas of the bodies of the United Nations and of many other international

organizations. More attention was also being given to co-operation efforts in the social area and to overcoming obstacles that had limited the scope and effectiveness of such co-operation.

14. The pervasiveness and acuteness of social problems were clearly factors behind such heightened interest. Rapid social change had had uneven effects on different segments of society, bringing not only new opportunities but also new problems and new tensions. Rapid economic advance for some had widened the gap between the more and the less privileged. That could be seen both at the country level and within countries.

15. The crises and convulsions of the global economy of the preceding two decades had buffeted developing countries and had left many of them weakened and more exposed to various external and internal shocks. Imbalances at the global level - reflected, inter alia, in an aggregate outflow of resources from the developing to the developed countries, the high level of debt of many developing countries, high interest rates and volatile financial, foreign exchange and commodity markets - continued to constrain the growth prospects in developing countries and the possibilities for improving living conditions. The economies of many developing countries had stagnated or regressed, living conditions had worsened and the number of disadvantaged and vulnerable people had increased. Those trends had been exacerbated in many cases by high rates of population growth.

16. Many developing countries had been left with little room for manoeuvring and had been forced by circumstances to adopt austerity and stabilization measures. Such measures had had a high immediate social cost. Much of the burden had fallen on the weaker and poorer segments of society. Real incomes had fallen, work opportunities had become fewer and public services, including basic services to improve nutrition, health, education and social functioning, all of which had already been inadequate, had been retrenched. Social problems neglected in the past had assumed new dimensions, forcing themselves to the forefront of the political arena.

17. Crisis conditions had also triggered a process of re-evaluation of past policies and approaches to development. External shocks had stimulated internal reflection. Far-reaching structural adjustment or reform efforts had been initiated. While their future benefits were uncertain, the immediate sacrifices those measures entailed had stimulated efforts, at the national and international levels, to alleviate the social costs for the most hard-hit; they had also stimulated efforts to find more socially benign or sensitive approaches to achieve the goals of greater economic efficiency and soundly based economic growth.

18. More important, still, in the longer run, was that the crises had resulted in attention being focused once again on the multi-dimensional nature of development, the interaction between the economic and the social. They had dramatized the consequences of past neglect of what had come to be termed human development - the enhancement of people's skills and capabilities - and had focused attention on the importance of providing personal incentives and opportunities for people to promote their own well-being. The technocratic, top-down approach, particularly in determining priorities, was increasingly being seen as no longer being appropriate.

19. Within a context of unresolved problems affecting the efficient functioning of the global economy, developing countries were reshaping their domestic

strategies. International co-operation had a critical role to play at that juncture. Both bilateral and multilateral co-operation agencies had recognized the need to adjust their responses to the problems and varying needs of developing countries in line with their new priorities. In particular, greater interest had been shown in recent years in channelling assistance and co-operation resources to support social development objectives that required multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approaches. Such objectives included the development of human resources; the enhancement of opportunities for the poorer and variously disadvantaged segments of society; the strengthening of institutions for the promotion of more effective popular participation and the self-help efforts of individuals, groups and communities; and the improvement of effective co-operation between all levels of government and other agents of social development.

20. Intentions needed to be translated into more effective action. That would require changes in attitudes, operating structures and programme and project design, as well as the deployment and follow-up of use of resources in accordance with changing needs. Within the context of current activity, particular priority was being given to the role of women in development. For that to be sustained into the longer term, however, there was a need to increase society's awareness of gender-specific problems.

III. ECONOMIC POLICY AND SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

21. Successful development required that social and economic policies reinforce each other and work in the same direction. Economic growth did not in itself guarantee social progress; nor should social policy be seen as merely compensating for the negative side-effects of the process of economic growth. An appropriate social framework that combined incentives and equity was necessary if economic growth was to be sustainable. That had to be combined with the full development of human skills and capabilities. At the same time, growth based on the effective use of a country's total resources, human and physical, would support social objectives by creating widely diffused opportunities for productive activities and the new resources needed for enhancing the social infrastructure.

22. Structural adjustment programmes provided a new opportunity for putting an integrated approach into practice. As a first step, it was recognized that, in conjunction with economic adjustment programmes, Governments needed to plan measures at the earliest stages to cushion their adverse effects on the weakest strata and segments of society. For that to be possible, such effects needed to be anticipated. That, in turn, required a greater capacity for social analysis and a better understanding of the impact of policy measures on different social strata and groups, based on more adequate basic information and better use of existing data.

23. The effort to cushion the adverse effects on the weakest strata and segments of society had been facilitated in some countries by the creation of a social emergency fund. Deliberate efforts to protect and, if possible, to augment normal budgetary allocations to the social sectors for investment in human capital needed to be the corner-stone of any viable development strategy. That was particularly important if the sacrifices in the short term were to bring benefits over the longer term.

24. At the same time, the pattern of public expenditure needed to be changed in favour of investment and in favour of activities that attacked the root causes of social problems, not merely their symptoms.

25. The Meeting emphasized that the following points were particularly important:

(a) The establishment of social emergency funds should be considered by countries embarking on stabilization and adjustment programmes to cushion their immediate impact on the weakest strata and segments of society. Such funds should be created and resources should be at least partly secured before the economic measures were introduced. Donors should consider contributing to such funds;

(b) Analytical techniques for assessing the impact of policies on different strata and segments of society should be refined, particularly those that did not depend on elaborate information systems, and donors and international organizations should provide technical support for such efforts;

(c) The following four criteria were advanced for the design of socially oriented activities initiated within or outside the context of adjustment programmes:

(i) The mechanism for making allocations from the resources of emergency and investment funds should be simple. Appropriate central guidance should be provided, but considerable delegation of powers concerning details should also be envisaged;

(ii) There had to be full involvement of various social actors besides government, which might include labour unions, religious and voluntary organizations, local neighbourhood or community structures and community leaders, farmer and peasant associations or co-operatives, and other groups, such as youth or women's associations and mothers' clubs;

(iii) The cultural heritage and social values of those involved in programmes and projects should be fully taken into account;

(iv) Income-generating projects with a social purpose should promote activities that would be viable within a market pricing structure that reflected real costs, that is, activities that were sustainable without recurrent public subsidy.

IV. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

26. Attention had already been drawn to the need for a greater degree of social analysis in the determination of policies and initiatives aimed at dealing with the problems arising from the economic environment in which developing countries were currently required to operate. There was, however, an equal need to incorporate such an approach into the wider issue of sustainable long-term development. That could best be achieved by using the concept of social development, which could be defined as follows: a broad process of change to improve the well-being and/or situation of the community and the individual on a sustainable basis.

27. In order to incorporate that concept into patterns of planning and activity, it should be utilized with the associated concept of developmental social welfare, which, in the current context, could be defined as follows: an approach aimed at strengthening the social confidence and capabilities of each individual beyond what could be attained by the efforts of individuals themselves, activities in the local environment and activities in other social sectors. Developmental social welfare must therefore concern itself with the root causes of social dysfunction and not limit itself to merely alleviating symptoms.*

28. Those two concepts were used as the guiding perspective for the discussion that followed. Particular emphasis was placed on demonstrating how they could contribute to the formulation of policies and practices that dealt directly with both the social issues resulting from the current economic environment and the aim of achieving sustainable long-term development.

V. THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Partnership and participation

29. The parallel ideas of "partnership" and "participation" were essential for sustainable development. Their application at all levels of the process was needed if sustainable social development, as defined in the preceding section, was to be achieved. On the one hand, there was the relationship between States; on the other, there was that between a State and its citizens. In both cases there was a need for relations to be characterized by mutual respect and recognition. That had to be reflected in all forms of activity, whether it was between donors and recipients, providers and clients of services, or planners and beneficiaries. There was also a particular need for co-operation and co-ordination between donors and between branches of government in both donor and recipient countries.

30. An emphasis on participation and partnership would have a major impact on the efficiency of the overall development effort. A situation characterized by people being excluded from full participation or being unable to develop their talents and potential to the full represented a great waste of resources, one that developing countries simply could not afford. Furthermore, in developing their talents, people were also able to develop their capacity to become fully functioning citizens.

31. One of the most important manifestations of the participatory approach was the degree of recognition that was given to the participation of women in development.

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*A more comprehensive description of developmental social welfare is given in the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Polices and Programmes in the Near Future, which were adopted at the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, held at Vienna from 7 to 15 September 1987 (E/CONF.80/10), and were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/125.

B. Participation in social development

32. Sustainable social development required intended beneficiaries and other interested parties to be actively involved in the design and implementation of programmes and projects. That was the most effective way of ensuring the degree of commitment that was needed for their successful completion. Planners in both donor and recipient countries needed to make continual efforts to ensure that the social dimension was taken into account during project design and that appropriate participatory mechanisms were included in their plans.

33. There was also a need for a greater degree of flexibility in the implementation of projects. As a project progressed, the knowledge and expectations of all involved, as planners, implementers or beneficiaries, would change and there must be scope for reshaping the direction of the project as a result of that learning process. Finally, there must be effective consideration of the question of the "ownership" of the project that effective participation would generate.

34. Such activities would require additional time and resources, from both donors and recipients, which needed to be catered for in the design and funding of programmes and projects. In particular there was a need for social scientists with the appropriate skills and experience to facilitate participation and to ensure the effective incorporation of existing local knowledge and experience. Where possible, such scientists should be from the country in which the activity was undertaken, though it was important to recognize that because of past educational priority decisions, there was a great shortage of such specialists in many countries. That was another aspect of social development that had not been adequately dealt with. There was also an allied need for appropriate education to build on the opportunities that participation provided, which would, in turn, feed back into enhanced citizenship roles.

35. Such participation related closely to the increasing acceptance of the need for government structures to be more responsive to the needs of those they served. The communication and dialogue generated by participation would assist greatly in that process but would not be enough on their own. There was also a need for programmes of additional training and institutional strengthening in those areas. That, too, would feed back into more effective government.

36. Appropriate recognition also needed to be given to people's capacity to initiate their own development activities. To assist that, Governments should facilitate access by all citizens to basic factors of production, especially land, credit and training.

C. Resources for development implementation

37. If the potential benefits of effective social development were to be realized, there needed to be a sustained effort to ensure that that approach was reflected in all stages of the project cycle, from identification and planning to implementation, monitoring and final evaluation. The problem was one of attitudes and awareness, more than anything else. Professional and technical staff needed to ensure that an appropriate social perspective was incorporated into all aspects of their work and into all projects. There was abundant evidence that that could work just as fruitfully in major capital projects as in more obviously people-oriented ones.

38. In order for existing staff to be able to effect that change, appropriate training and/or sensitizing was required. That applied to both planning staff and those concerned with field implementation, who needed to acquire new skills. It was also necessary to recruit more social scientists who had the training and experience to assist in the planning and implementation of a social development orientation. Such specialists would complement the range of existing skills to ensure effective design and implementation.

39. That new orientation would result in the recognition of the needs of interested parties who had been neglected, particularly women, and the tackling of previously neglected issues. That would result in improved sensitivity in the planning process and the success of that would be reflected in such issues becoming increasingly incorporated into planning documents. The extent to which the practical and strategic initiatives needed to achieve full equality between women and men were dealt with would be a particularly significant indicator.

40. The Meeting emphasized that the following points were particularly important:

(a) Governments and donors must ensure that the appropriate social dimension was incorporated into all stages of development activity;

(b) That approach should be reflected in the implementation of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, which was to be considered for adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session;

(c) The Commission for Social Development, which had provided input for the elaboration of international development strategy, should give special attention to monitoring its implementation;

(d) Governments and donors should develop procedures to facilitate the effective participation of beneficiaries and other interested parties in project design and implementation in order to ensure that the social dimension was incorporated into all stages of development activity;

(e) Existing consultative structures, both formal and informal, should be utilized, wherever possible, in order to facilitate such effective participation;

(f) At the same time, there was a need to adapt traditional ways of bringing community influence to bear upon the decision-making process and to make better use of the capabilities of non-governmental organizations, such as co-operatives and trade unions;

(g) Governments and donors must accept that projects would increasingly require additional financial and technical inputs to ensure effective participation;

(h) Governments and donors needed to ensure that the appropriate range of professional skills were available so that an effective social input could be made into development activities; enhanced training would therefore be necessary;

(i) Donors needed to assist with funds to ensure the strengthening of planning and implementation structures in recipient countries;

(j) Governments and donors should implement programmes for the retraining and sensitization training of existing staff in order to achieve an appropriate level of social awareness. A high priority should be given to training in relation to gender issues;

(k) Governments and donors should ensure that all development activities were aimed at enhancing de facto equality between women and men. In particular, it was necessary to identify and tackle the constraints that inhibited women's participation, health and productivity and to improve their access to critical elements of production, services and community affairs.

VI. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENTAL SOCIAL WELFARE: THE DISADVANTAGED AND VULNERABLE

41. One goal of social development was to ensure equal access of all members of society to a satisfactory standard of living, the disadvantaged and vulnerable being of special concern in formulating policies. The disadvantaged were those who lacked the means to partake of such living standards. Disadvantaged persons might include those discriminated against for various reasons, for example, because of their gender, age, disability or social or ethnic background. Also included were those suffering economic deprivation for other reasons, for example, workers made redundant or displaced by the implementation of structural adjustment programmes.

42. The vulnerable were those who, although not necessarily disadvantaged, nevertheless required special attention to ensure that they could enjoy a satisfactory standard of living. They included, among others, children, the young, the aged and migrants (especially refugees). While such vulnerable groups must be treated as a distinct category, it should also be recognized that all persons were, in one sense or another, vulnerable. Thus, any person could become disadvantaged. It could happen for any number of reasons, for instance, by virtue of becoming ill, disabled, aged, cut off from family support, unemployed or displaced. The attitude of society to the disadvantaged or vulnerable was therefore of relevance to all its members; it defined the values and priorities of a society.

43. Programmes in favour of the disadvantaged and vulnerable should not be classified, therefore, as charity, but as contributing to both social justice and social cohesion. Many also brought economic returns to society, although those were not easily quantifiable.

44. Economic growth, while essential to development, did not in itself guarantee that the disadvantaged would benefit. Accordingly, distinct measures needed to be put in place to ensure the protection of social and individual rights as part of an integrated approach to development.

45. In dealing with the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable, a variety of strategies needed to be utilized, each tailored to suit the particular attendant circumstances.

A. Themes of immediate concern

46. In considering the large and complex area of social development and developmental social welfare, the Meeting identified themes concerning the disadvantaged and vulnerable that were of immediate concern. These are presented below.

1. Research and data collection

47. As a prerequisite for designing and implementing more effective programmes, there should be more focused research and data collection on the social situation, particularly that relating to the disadvantaged. With the help of such research and data, Governments and international organizations involved in development co-operation could identify social programmes appropriate to the level of need and relevant to the economic policies being pursued.

48. The research should preferably be conducted by national researchers in developing countries whose capabilities had been strengthened for that purpose. Given the similarities existing in developing countries, their collaboration in that area would be useful.

49. In addition to the assemblage of baseline data, it was equally important to put systems in place for the continuous monitoring of social indicators. Donors could assist Governments of developing countries in instituting monitoring systems that took into account cost, ease of implementation and sustainability.

2. Instruments for self-help

50. Programmes should be designed to provide instruments enabling the disadvantaged to help themselves. Such programmes should include the following:

(a) Information, education and communication activities to enable individuals to utilize existing channels for their participation in development, the advancement of their interests, and their adaptation to changes in the socio-economic environment;

(b) Assistance with organization so that the disadvantaged might unite to combine their skills and abilities to promote their interests through pressure groups and developmental associations and might influence the environment and/or society through joint participation.

3. Advocacy

51. In concert with self-help, advocacy by others, on behalf of the disadvantaged, was also necessary to influence those in positions of authority and to mobilize support.

4. Training

52. Priority should be given to training local organizers and personnel, such as social workers, in institutions and organizations in developing countries in effective strategies and techniques to benefit the disadvantaged, and to achieve equal opportunity for all.

5. Local responsibility

53. For programmes to be most effective they should start at the local level, where the community was responsible for identifying a programme of action for its disadvantaged groups. It was, therefore, important for communities to be sensitized to the needs and potentials of those groups and to know how best to deal with them. Non-governmental organizations could play a crucial role in that regard and should be utilized, either in collaboration with Governments or on their own, to help to plan and implement programmes for the disadvantaged. Financial support could be provided either directly or through the Government, as appropriate.

6. State responsibility

54. The State had the overall responsibility for the welfare of all its citizens and provided the policies and operational framework within which local initiatives took place. A practical way in which the State could be instrumental in promoting help for the disadvantaged was by stimulating programmes for people to help each other. For instance, the State might form an umbrella organization to foster and co-ordinate the activities of community-based organizations. Additionally, where there were gaps in services or duplication of efforts by non-governmental organizations, Governments and donor agencies should use incentives to stimulate activities towards neglected areas and/or away from others that were overserved.

7. Criteria

55. The following three criteria were important for projects and social programmes designed to advance the interests of the disadvantaged: (a) they must reflect the social and cultural background of the society; (b) they must have an impact on the root causes of the problems; and (c) their intended improvements must be sustainable. In connection with the latter, initial funding for a project might be provided by the State and/or by external funding agencies. While such funding could rarely be provided by the community itself, the ideal situation was one in which the community had an economic base that would enable it to sustain certain social programmes. The economic development of a community was, therefore, often a necessary feature of programmes designed to assist the disadvantaged.

B. Programme emphasis

56. Programmes should be designed to benefit categories of the population ranging from those in immediate need to those considered to be potentially vulnerable; that is, there was need for a preventive component. Those programmes should move from support and care towards protection, habilitation and rehabilitation, and positive intervention to ensure the fullest development and effective social functioning of all.

57. Thus, programmes in support of disabled persons needed to be conceived with prevention, education and training, habilitation and rehabilitation, and the equalization of opportunities as major objectives.

58. In regard to children, greater stress should be placed on integrated development services and on enhancing the capacity of families to care for their children. Programmes for young people needed to be strengthened to meet

the special requirements on a priority basis of the most disadvantaged, while keeping in mind the needs of young people in special vulnerable categories.

59. The focus of programmes in respect to the elderly should be on the maintenance of their human dignity, independent social functioning and links to the family and community.

VII. OBSTACLES TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

60. Many obstacles stood in the way of successful social development. They might be grouped under the headings of conceptual, structural and practical. The definitions of social development and of developmental social welfare, together with the points emphasized by the Meeting as being particularly important (see sections III and V above), were intended as a contribution to the lowering of conceptual obstacles. Structural obstacles were also touched on, but the Meeting was not able to go into a deeper analysis. It focused, instead, on practical obstacles, especially on measures that, with a small push, could be expected to have a major impact. Given its special concern with co-operation strategies, the Meeting paid particular attention to synchronized action by the co-operating partners that would overcome various practical obstacles to effective co-operation for promoting social development.

A. Low priority of social programmes

61. The view persisted that programmes implemented by ministries of social affairs or welfare were hand-outs to the disadvantaged. That view, and the fact that the disadvantaged had little influence in society, contributed to their needs being low on the list of priorities in public resource allocation. It was therefore particularly important to stress the universal nature of social programmes and to emphasize the fact that anyone might, at one time or another, require support from the community; and that efforts to develop the capabilities and capacity for social functioning of disadvantaged individuals and groups benefited society as a whole.

62. To that end, the concept of developmental social welfare needed to be emphasized. In particular, better techniques for assessing the returns to society of welfare programmes needed to be elaborated, focusing on the economic returns of the preventive and developmental components in programmes. Such techniques were already widely used in some sectors, such as health and education, but had not been systematically applied to developmental social welfare programmes. International organizations and donor Governments needed to support efforts to that end; progress would strengthen the hand of ministries of social affairs or welfare in developing countries in obtaining access to domestic public resources, as well as external assistance.

B. Status of ministries of social affairs or welfare

63. Responsibility in the social area was typically dispersed among many central government entities, important developmental social welfare components being the responsibility of ministries other than those of social affairs or welfare, some with stronger or better organized constituencies. Provincial and local authorities also had important responsibilities in social welfare, often more significant than in other social sectors. It was therefore more difficult to develop and present a coherent national strategy; different

programmes often competed as much with each other as with the claims of other sectors for public resources. Similar problems of co-ordination existed in most donor Governments and in the United Nations system. In that connection, the Meeting welcomed the decision by the Secretary-General to make the United Nations Office at Vienna the nucleus for all activities relating to social policy and social development, as described in the progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 (A/42/234). It noted that, in General Assembly resolution 42/125, the Secretary-General was requested to implement the recommendations contained in the Guiding Principles concerning international co-operation with regard to developmental social welfare, using the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs as the focal point.

64. In developing countries more attention needed to be given to achieving greater coherence in national programmes by establishing consultative mechanisms for assessing overall needs at the country level that could also serve as clearing-houses for co-operation activities in the social area.

65. Development co-operation agencies of donor Governments should seek to establish closer links with all relevant ministries, including those of social welfare, together with their provincial and local counterparts, and should draw more on their professional expertise in designing co-operation policies and programmes. Greater involvement of those government entities in international exchanges and in the specialized training of personnel from developing countries were recommended.

C. Donor agency procedures

66. Social development tended to have a long-term focus and the benefits were often intangible. Donor agencies typically had shorter planning horizons and wished to see not only more immediate but also more tangible results. Greater attention needed to be given to how those contradictions could be reconciled.

67. One way of doing that was to develop more appropriate programme and project assessment methods for the selection of activities to be supported, as well as more appropriate evaluation techniques, the focus being shifted from evaluating implementation to evaluating impact. Above all, the procedures for programme and project preparation and approval needed to be simplified and to be made more flexible. In that respect, a co-operative effort on the side of donor agencies would be highly desirable.

68. Many projects in the social area tended to be small and the need to keep down the extraneous costs was therefore especially important. Pilot projects tended to be expert-intensive and thus expensive. More attention needed to be given, at all stages of project design, to ensuring that they lent themselves to wide replication at much lower "unit cost". More attention also needed to be given, in both developing and donor countries, to ensuring that projects could become self-supporting after donor support ceased. Thus, in deciding investments in the social area, both parties needed to consider more carefully the maintenance costs involved and the sources of funds for recurrent expenses, especially for staffing. At the same time, programmes could be supported more effectively with a more flexible approach to meeting local and recurrent costs, which tended to be particularly important in the social area.

69. Current donor procedures were time-consuming. They placed a heavy burden on personnel in developing countries, which ministries of social affairs or

welfare found especially difficult to shoulder. Efforts needed to be made to streamline bureaucratic procedures, bearing in mind the need for appropriate public accountability, so that the dialogue with co-operating countries could focus on the substance of activities, in line with the ideas of partnership and participation emphasized by the Meeting.

Appendix I

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Units of the Secretariat

United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

Appendix II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title or description	Symbol
Annotated provisional agenda	EGM/SSDC/1990/1
Proposed timetable and organization of work	EGM/SSDC/1990/2
Background notes prepared by Vappu Taipale, Finland	EGM/SSDC/1990/3
Background notes prepared by Gábor Bagdy, Hungary	EGM/SSDC/1990/4
Background notes prepared by Eric Hanley, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	EGM/SSDC/1990/5
Background notes prepared by Bertil Mathsson, Sweden	EGM/SSDC/1990/6
Background notes prepared by Pauline Knight, Jamaica	EGM/SSDC/1990/7
Background notes prepared by Maria Pia Dradi, Italy	EGM/SSDC/1990/8
Background notes prepared by Mohamed El Hedi Ben Abdallah, Tunisia	EGM/SSDC/1990/9
Background notes prepared by Ignatius Setyoko, Indonesia	EGM/SSDC/1990/10
Background notes prepared by Davison K. Mendamenda, Zambia	EGM/SSDC/1990/11
Background notes prepared by Alejandro Mercado, Bolivia	EGM/SSDC/1990/12
Background notes prepared by Dorrit Alopaeus-Staahl, Sweden	EGM/SSDC/1990/13
Background notes prepared by Salmon Odunga, United Republic of Tanzania	EGM/SSDC/1990/14
Background notes prepared by Alexander Tkachenko, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	EGM/SSDC/1990/15